

Localism: A Commitment to Serving The Quad Cities

WHBF-TV, CBS Affiliate – Rock Island, IL

WHBF-TV demonstrates a significant investment in *local news programming*.

While our fourteen half-hour newscasts per week – Sunday through Friday at 5pm & 10pm and Saturdays at 6pm & 10pm - represent just 5% of our total weekly broadcast schedule, a full 51% of the station's staff, in the news and production departments, is dedicated to the preparation and presentation of these newscasts.

We feel strongly that Channel 4 Eyewitness news is our viewers' primary source of information about the events and issues that affect them everyday right here in their own community. We take that responsibility very seriously as we make decisions about the news we cover and the ways in which we cover it. Our primary goal is to give our viewers the information they need to be responsible members of the community, to make informed decisions about the important issues faced by the community, and to participate in a meaningful way in the overall life of the community.

We have a similar commitment to *local public affairs programming*. We produce and air a weekly half-hour news/information program entitled Channel 4 Eyewitness News For the Record. This program is a forum for discussion on key events and issues in the Quad Cities and features guests including local community leaders, volunteers, event participants, agency representatives, etc. In 2004, the program included discussion on local topics like child abuse, senior services, youth after school programs and activities, the impact of budget cuts on local schools, area unemployment, domestic violence, AIDS Project Quad Cities, children's charities and other social services, minority issues and others. This long form programming is supplemented by a schedule of public service announcements addressing important local issues, promoting meaningful local agencies and events, and encouraging volunteerism on a local level. Many of these issues, agencies and events are also included on the Community Calendar segment of our morning news cut-ins.

To help guide our efforts in both news and public service programming, we have an active local ascertainment process. Each quarter, we hold an ascertainment meeting in which we invite six to ten guest, representing a cross-section of the community. Through the course of our discussion, we attempt to ascertain what they believe to be the most important issues facing the Quad City area. We also provide guests to the station a written ascertainment form in which they too identify key local issues that need to be addressed. We conduct between 25-30 interviews each quarter and use them to help guide our news and public service programming choices.

Our website (whbf.com) supplements and reinforces our on-air efforts in news and public service programming. Our efforts in news and public service programming are documented in more significant detail in the Quarterly Issues/Program List located in our Public Inspection File.

In addition to regularly scheduled news and information programming, we also have systems put in place to provide ***emergency programming*** information on an as-needed basis. Special news reports, severe weather announcements, school closings and cancellations, Amber Alert notifications, and EAS are all examples of these emergency programming commitments.

During the recently concluded political campaign season, WHBF-TV provided a myriad of ***political programming*** to help inform our viewers on the local races and candidates. First, from Labor Day until Election Day, we committed a minimum of five minutes per day to candidate-driven, ***local election coverage during our regularly scheduled newscasts***. Those efforts are documented in our Public Inspection File. In addition, WHBF-TV offered all qualified candidates for federal office, representing some part of our viewing area, five minutes of ***free airtime*** to air between September and November. Those invitations went out to 22 candidates, 10 of which accepted our offer, and seven of which ultimately aired. In addition, we offered to produce and air a ***televised debate*** between candidates for the two key Congressional races in our viewing area but the offer was declined. Finally, we aired a debate between U.S. Senate candidates in the state of Illinois that was produced by WLS-TV in Chicago. On November 2nd, in addition to our regularly scheduled news programs, during CBS election coverage from 6-10pm, we provided ***local election coverage*** for seven minutes of every half-hour including cut-ins at 6:53pm, 7:23pm, 7:53pm, 8:23pm, 8:53pm, 9:23pm and 9:53pm.

WHBF-TV provides a significant amount of ***community service programming*** for local social service agencies, fundraising efforts, and community events. Local events for which we are a media partner include: The annual cookie Drive and also the Women and Girls On the Move event on behalf of the Girl Scouts of the Mississippi Valley; Gallery Hop, a summer-long series of events sponsored by Midcoast Fine Arts and the Illinois Arts Council and designed to support and encourage the local arts community; Gumbo Ya Ya and other events of Renaissance Rock Island to help support the Rock Island downtown district of which we are a part; Toys For Tots, a program to collect new and slightly used toys for the needy during the holiday season; annual blood drives on behalf of the Mississippi Valley Regional Blood Center; Festival of Trees, a holiday festival to benefit the Quad City Arts; And other community festivals/events including Firecracker Run, Balloons in June, Henry County Fair, Rock Island County Fair, the Mississippi Valley Fair and others.

In addition to those listed above, WHBF-TV has formed major partnerships with a number of community organizations and, in addition to airtime, devotes time, manpower, and other resources to their cause.

- WHBF-TV enjoys a long and productive relationship with **Crimestoppers of the Quad Cities**. Our commitment to them includes weekly PSA's produced for air throughout our broadcast day, a weekly 'criminal of the week' segment which airs in our regularly scheduled newscasts, and sponsorship of their annual 5K Run fundraiser. We have been instrumental in the apprehension of more than 100 local criminals over the course of our association with the organization. WHBF-TV has been named Crimestoppers Station-Of-The-Year for two years running.
- **Summerfest** is an annual summer festival that provides the opportunity for local charities to man food booths in order to raise money for their various constituents. WHBF-TV has long been a community partner in the event. Our promotion manager has been on the Summerfest board of directors for five years running, serving as an executive vice-president for the last two. In addition, we provide space at the station during the event for administrative, accounting and other festival duties.
- WHBF-TV has also enjoyed a productive relationship with **United Way of the Quad Cities**, participating each year in their workplace fundraising drive. Staff members volunteer to serve as liaisons and drive the fundraising efforts inside the station. Those efforts have resulted in record employee participation for three years running.
- Each February, WHBF-TV provides a place for area children participating in the **Junior Achievement Job Shadow Day**. In addition to hosting young people exploring career opportunities, for the past four years, WHBF-TV has worked with J.A. to produce the day's welcome video shown to all participants.

In 2003, WHBF-TV organized and launched the **Warmth For Winter** campaign. Viewers were asked to donate new or gently used coats, hats, gloves, and other winter wear for those in the community who are in need. We partnered with Sanitary Cleaners, which served as a collection point and also cleaned the coats, and distributed the clothing through the agencies of the United Way on both sides of the river.

Since 1988, **Variety, The Children's Charity** has been active in the Quad Cities, providing funding to local children's charities. In 1994, WHBF-TV began airing the statewide telethon produced by our sister station in Des Moines. In 1995, we began producing local segments of the telethon in an effort to boost local fundraising and, in turn, provide more help for local charities. In 2004, more than \$200,000 was raised during the effort. Over its history, more than \$2 million has been distributed to local children's charities right here in the Quad Cities. Since its inception, Variety's local executive committee has included members of the WHBF-TV management staff and does to this day. WHBF-TV continues to play a critical role in the growth of this important charitable organization.

Finally, our on-air personalities regularly make themselves available for public appearances of all varieties around the community. From acting as emcees for local chamber and other civic organizations to reading to young people in area schools, from appearing in local community parades and festivals to lending their celebrity for worthy charitable causes, the people of Channel 4 Eyewitness News participate actively in the life of the community.

In the end, WHBF-TV not only serves the Quad City community but is an active part of it. We provide a tremendous service to our viewers, connecting them to their community, but we are also charged with the responsibility to be a good corporate and community citizen by participating in a visible and constructive way to influence the quality of life in our community. And, for more than 50 years, we feel we have succeeded in that mission.

Ray Cole
President, Citadel Communications Co.